

### **A. Examples of Bad Signage**



**BS-1**

**SIGN:**

Trail

**COMMENT:**

Poor maintenance.  
Poor placement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace and  
reposition sign.



**BS-2**

**SIGN:**

No Trespassing

**COMMENT:**

Ineffective. Access not  
limited. Sign poorly  
maintained.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign. Limit  
access. Increase  
patrols of site or  
implement other safety  
measures.



BS-3

**SIGN:**

Caution Dam Ahead  
Keep Away

**COMMENT:**

Poor condition.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Repaint sign.



BS-4

**SIGN:**

Private Property No  
Trespassing

**COMMENT:**

Sign is too cluttered.  
Message is repeated  
too often.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign with  
single warning to  
increase effectiveness.





BS-5

**SIGN:**

Danger Dam Ahead

**COMMENT:**

Sign design is good, but bottom portion of sign is obscured.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Reposition sign to be visible.



BS-6

**SIGN:**

Danger Proximity of this Operations Area to Dam Makes it Extremely Dangerous for Fishing and Swimming Please Do Not Fish or Enter Water Here

**COMMENT:**

Sign obscured by fence. Sign caption may be too long.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Reposition sign for better visibility. Assess clarity of message.



BS-7

**SIGN:**

Danger....

**COMMENT:**

Sign is faded and illegible.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Repaint or replace with standard sign.



BS-8

**SIGN:**

Boat Barrier Not Installed  
Danger Dam 8000 Feet  
Ahead Exit Left Bank.

**COMMENT:**

Spray painted sign is less effective. Poor condition.  
Unclear message for "Exit."  
Less effective font.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign with different lettering and clear "Portage" indicator.



BS-9

**SIGN:**

Warning Dangerous  
Undertow and Strong Current  
in this Area

**COMMENT:**

Sign rusted and difficult  
to read.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Repaint sign. Possibly need  
to reposition to prevent future  
rusting.



BS-10

**SIGN:**

No Trespassing

**COMMENT:**

Poor spacing of message.  
No company/owner  
information.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace with standard No  
Trespassing sign with small  
company contact information.





BS-11

**SIGN:**

Beware Water Rises Rapidly

**COMMENT:**

Poor sign condition.  
Ineffective font. No warning coloration scheme used.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign. Use a more effective font and color scheme.



BS-12

**SIGN:**

Dam Ahead

**COMMENT:**

Green color often used for information, not warning.  
Sign obscured.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Remove obscuring vegetation. Replace sign with proper color scheme.



BS-13

**SIGN:**

Take Out

**COMMENT:**

Inappropriate sign material (cardboard).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Construct sign of more durable material. Format and wording are acceptable.



BS-14

**SIGN:**

Dam Thin Ice

**COMMENT:**

Sign faded. Good placement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Repaint. Assess need for lighting if area used by ice fisherman.





BS-15

**SIGN:**

Turbine Running

**COMMENT:**

Use of technical terms confusing to public. Sign partially obscured.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace with less technically worded sign. Move sign to more readable position.



BS-16

**SIGN:**

Dam Ahead Danger  
Keep Away

**COMMENT:**

Sign deteriorated.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign. Include contrasting border to distinguish sign from background.



BS-17

**SIGN:**

No Boating Below this Point

**COMMENT:**

Good font and font size.  
Picnic table may obscure  
sign from boaters.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Check placement of table  
and move as necessary.



BS-18

**SIGN:**

Warning Dam Ahead

**COMMENT:**

Coloration and font are good.  
Not enough space between  
text and border.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace.



BS-19

**SIGN:**

Warning Dangerous Undertow and Strong Currents in this Area, Warning Flashing Light and Horn Indicate Change in Water Level

**COMMENT:**

Trigger word leads to information about other safety measures in place. Identifies possible hazard.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Upon replacement, use same format and size for both signs to increase effectiveness.



BS-20

**SIGN:**

Warning Water Subject to Rise and Become Swift at Any Time. Be Cautious if You Enter River, Danger..., Hazardous...

**COMMENT:**

Trigger word leads to information about other safety measures in place. Identifies possible hazard.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Upon replacement, correct grammar, make signs uniform to reduce clutter and increase effectiveness.





BS-21

**SIGN:**

Caution Lake Dam Could Possibly be Spilling Lake is Rising Be Careful

**COMMENT:**

Temporary signs may be less effective than portable signs designed for short term events.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Projects with special events should assess the need for effective PORTABLE signage. Consider use of permanent sign with removable cover



BS-22

**SIGN:**

Unreadable

**COMMENT:**

Paper or laminated signs will fade and become water damaged over even short periods of time.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace with a permanent sign or remove sign if the danger was temporary. A well maintained sign indicates a higher level of care, and enforcement to the viewer.



**SIGN:**

Warning No Trailered Boat Launching...

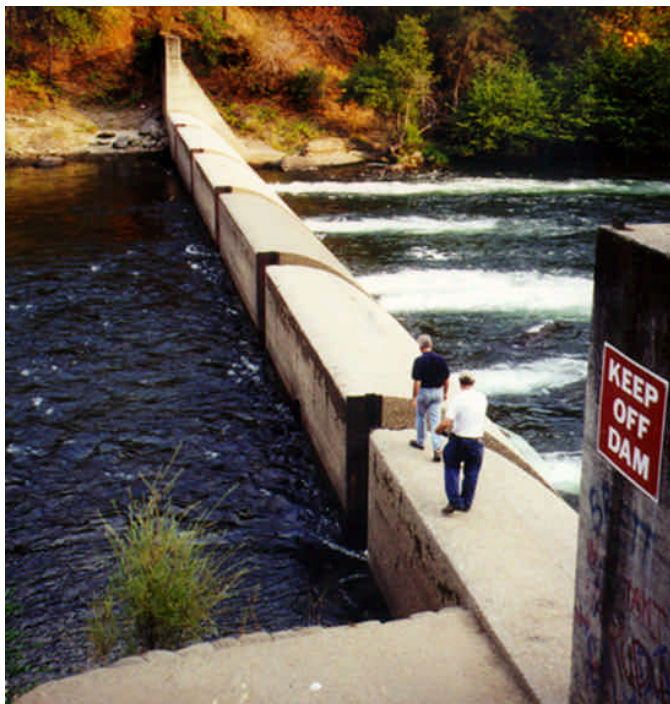
**COMMENT:**

Sign has faded and been vandalized. Warning text is well grouped and stated, but disrepair detracts from effectiveness.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace or repair, and assess need for more frequent maintenance or anti-vandalism measures.

BS-23



BS-24

**SIGN:**

Keep Off Dam

**COMMENT:**

Coloring, position, and text are good. Sign ineffective as only measure. Worn dirt area indicates possible frequent use of banking.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Assess need for additional measures including signs that are visible from all approaches to the dam, fencing, increased monitoring of area, or addition of penalty/law text on sign, if appropriate.





**SIGN:**

Danger Area Subject to  
Sudden Rising Water Flows

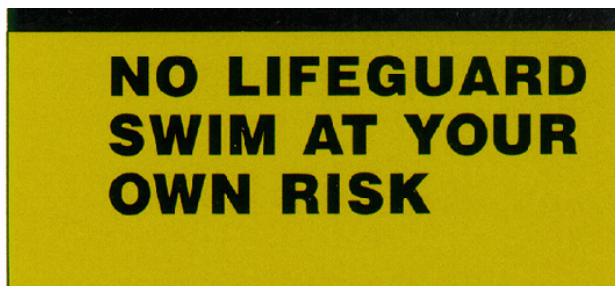
**COMMENT:**

Good usage of black on red  
color scheme with Danger  
trigger word. Damage to sign  
reduces effectiveness and  
readability.

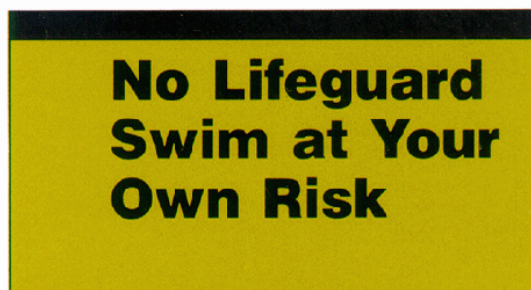
**RECOMMENDATION:**

Replace sign, and assess  
maintenance schedule.

BS-25



Incorrect: All capital letters



Correct: Initial capital letters

BS-26

**SIGN:**

No Lifeguard Swim at Your  
Own Risk

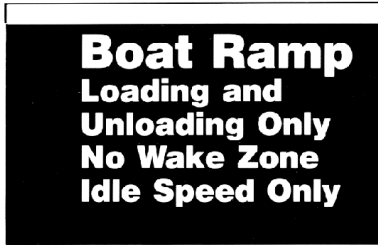
**COMMENT:**

Comparison of all capital  
letters to only initial capitals.  
USACE uses initial caps to  
increase glance legibility and  
lower reading time.

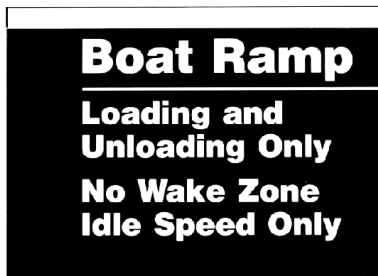
**RECOMMENDATION:**

Bottom sign capitalization  
meets USACE Standards.  
Both glance legibility and  
reading times may be  
important depending on the  
amount of time the viewer  
has to react to the warning.  
Consider these factors in  
sign design.





Incorrect: Equal line-spacing between all legend lines



Correct: Line-spacing varies according to the sense of the legend

**SIGN:**

Boat Ramp Loading and  
Unloading Only No Wake  
Zone Idle Speed Only

**COMMENT:**

USACE illustration indicates  
how line spacing and  
grouping prioritizes  
information for the viewer.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Bottom sign is more readable  
and conveys needed  
information more clearly than  
the top sign. Recommend  
grouping text appropriately.

**BS-27**